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BIENNIAL REPORT-1953-1955

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WILLIAM G. STRATTON, Governor

COMMISSION FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN
160 North LaSalle Street, Chicago, 1

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William G. Stratton, Governor

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160 North LaSalle Street
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STATE OF ILLINOIS

WILLIAM G. STRATTON, *Governor*

COMMISSION FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

May 2, 1955

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160 NORTH LA SALLE STREET
CHICAGO 1
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To the Honorable William G. Stratton, Governor
and
The Honorable Members of the 69th General Assembly
State of Illinois
Springfield

Gentlemen:

It is my privilege to submit herewith the report of the Commission for Handicapped Children for the sixty-eighth biennium.

In presenting this report, we have summarized our work during the past two years in carrying out the mandate given us by you. In order that it may be of value and interest to other citizens of Illinois, we have also attempted to picture the function of this Commission, to increase public understanding of the program which you have established for handicapped children, and to point up certain needs which call for further state-wide or local action.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen W. Dormitzer

Mrs. Henry C. Dormitzer
Chairman

HWD:oe

ONE GOAL for every child

There can be but one goal for every child - the fulfillment of his best potentialities.

Whether he be strong in body and mind or physically handicapped or mentally retarded, this is the single aim for his growth in any democratic society. No matter what his limitations are, the chance to develop his full capabilities is his rightful expectation. There is no place for a double standard in the opportunities offered to children.

FOR SOME

Yet for young people who carry the burden of physical or mental disability there are often serious blocks in the way of attaining this single goal.

The boy in a wheel chair who is barred from attending his community school by the long, imposing flight of stairs to its entrance.

The young blind girl who is isolated in her formative years because her community lacks a program to help her acquire experience in touch and sound to substitute for sight.

The mentally "slow" boy with no place to go in his neighborhood for training and companionship.

The child born without arms or with poor hearing or with palsy or with a weak heart, living in communities where there are no classrooms or recreation centers that take his special needs into account.

For many boys and girls such as these, the gaps between what is believed and what is practiced stand in the way of their best development.

FORWARD STRIDES

In recent years many forward strides have been made in the expansion and strengthening of education, health and recreation programs for handicapped youngsters in Illinois. Some aspects of the state's services for exceptional children are recognized as outstanding throughout the country. Still, the fact remains that in many areas programs for these young people fail to meet their special needs. In terms of wasted human resources and the dependency which often follows in adulthood, this oversight is a costly one to the state and local communities.

THE COMMISSION'S WORK

The work of the Commission for Handicapped Children is to take leadership in making available to handicapped boys and girls the services they need in order to grow into useful, independent, well-adjusted adults. As official representatives of their best interests, the Commission constantly strives to make the democratic principle of One Goal for every child a reality for them.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Commission, as established by the General Assembly in 1941 is:

> to act in an advisory and coordinating capacity to the legislative and executive branches of the state government on problems of children who are physically or mentally handicapped and
>
> to serve in a consulting and coordinating role to public and private agencies concerned with the care and rehabilitation of these children, including agencies that offer all types of programs for them: social service; physical rehabilitation; education; vocational counseling and social adjustment.

DIVISIONS OF WORK

In carrying out its responsibility the Commission's work comes under the main divisions of:

Fact-Finding on the problems of children with physical or mental disabilities and on ways to solve these problems.

Consultation	for individuals and agencies concerned with handicapped children.
Education	of the public to create understanding and acceptance of handicapped young people.
Coordination	of services for handicapped children in order to improve and strengthen programs for them.
Promotion	of services that are found needed so that more boys and girls with disabilities can reach their best potentialities.

COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP

On the Commission are nine prominent citizens actively interested in the problems of handicapped children and four ex-officio members including the state directors of Welfare, Labor, and Health, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The citizen representatives on the Commission are appointed by the Governor for three-year overlapping terms and serve without pay.

STAFF

The staff is composed of an Executive Director, a Medical Assistance Consultant, an Informational Representative, a Research Analyst, a Librarian and three clerk-stenographers.

THE CHILDREN

It is difficult to focus within one frame a composite picture of the many boys and girls for whom the Commission has responsibility. All types and degrees of disabling conditions are represented among them. They live in all sections of the state, from crowded city neighborhoods to the back roads of farmland communities.

No district is without its share of these children - the crippled ones, those with epilepsy, with tuberculosis; boys and girls with speech defects, with hearing loss, those who live in a shadowy world of impaired vision - all of them

reaching out for independence and the satisfactions of accomplishment. As do other young people, they need and seek their share of fun and achievement and acceptance in their own right.

All of these "exceptional" children differ from the average so-called normal child to the extent that they require special health or welfare or educational services if they are to attain a satisfying and productive adulthood.

MORE THAN ONE

Often the boys and girls for whom the Commission has official responsibility have more than one handicap. Too often, one disability begets another when diagnosis and treatment are delayed or inadequate. Without precautions and understanding, physical handicaps may have emotional repercussions that leave scars more crippling than the original disability.

HIGHLIGHTS

Highlights from the Commission's activities during the biennium, July 1, 1953 to June 30, 1955 are reviewed briefly in this report.

PRIORITY OF EFFORT

and

direction of program

Two major objectives were singled out for priority of Commission effort during this biennium.

I INTEGRATION — More integration of programs for handicapped children with those of other young people in the community in order to insure them against isolation and segregation in their daily activities.

The Commission believes that while special services in schools, recreation centers or institutions are essential for many handicapped youngsters, it is important to channel activities for them back into the mainstream of childhood experience whenever possible.

II PREVENTION — More prevention of handicapping conditions through opportunities for early discovery and treatment of disabilities. This includes the early recognition, not only of physical or mental disability but also of the emotional handicaps that often come as a result.

The Commission believes that more ounces of prevention in program-planning would reduce the necessity for additional pounds of cure for handicapped children.

FOLLOWING THROUGH

The Commission reached out to both professional personnel and community groups in working toward these major objectives. This effort was channeled through:

Talks before agency staffs, professional organizations and civic groups.

Distribution of printed material, some of it geared for staff training programs, some for use by community organizations.

Exhibits at conferences and meetings.

Sponsorship of institutes and work shops, some of them aimed to help professional workers to develop skills in working with handicapped children, others aimed to acquaint citizen groups with the needs of the handicapped boys and girls in their areas.

Consultation with agency program-planners and with community leaders.

PROFESSIONAL GROUPS

In working with professional groups, special effort was placed on stimulating agencies that serve children generally to adjust their programs to meet the needs of the handicapped child more adequately.

This effort was directed toward personnel and volunteers with: social service agencies, recreation centers, group work programs, nursery schools, health services, vocational programs, and local schools.

The Commission believes that many agencies and departments that are not now serving handicapped children could do so economically and effectively through adjustments or expansion of program. This would result in more integration of services for the exceptional child with those for other children. It would increase accessibility of programs for them, which is an important step in prevention-planning.

COMMUNITY GROUPS

In working with civic organizations and community leaders special effort was made to interest them in promoting more local services for handicapped young people. More local services are seen as essential to a program which focuses on prevention of handicapping conditions. This would relieve the increasing responsibilities which are now discharged only at the state level.

RESPONSE

The Commission has been gratified during this biennium by the increasing number of both professional agencies and community groups that have sought consultation on ways to insure more handicapped children a chance to achieve the One Goal for every child - the fulfillment of his best potentialities.

COURTESY, INFANT WELFARE SOCIETY OF CHICAGO

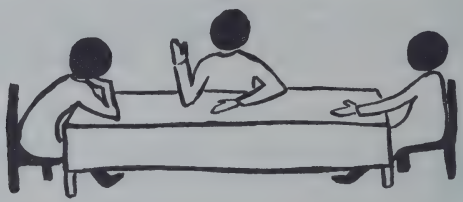
Well-baby clinics are prevention.

PULLING TOGETHER

coordination of services

a basic function of the Commission

An effective program for handicapped children requires a generous measure of cooperation and teamwork on the part of schools, clinics, social services, recreation centers, parent organizations, civic clubs. A basic function of the Commission is to serve as coordinator of programs and plans on behalf of these young people.



COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

One means for effecting joint consideration of problems and cooperative effort is the inter-agency and inter-group committee structure set up by the Commission. Some committees are called together to consider a specific problem or a special project, such as proposed legislation, or plans for an institute or work shop. Others are established as continuing committees or coordinating groups for long-term planning in a particular field.

The Interdepartmental Committee on Mentally Handicapped Children and the Advisory Committee on Hearing Conservation and Rehabilitation are two coordinating groups that worked with the Commission on a continuing basis during this biennium. The Citizens' Committee on Legislation for Exceptional Children is an example of a short-term committee brought together for joint consideration of a specific problem. The purpose of this group, which is made up of representatives from many agencies and community organizations, is to discuss proposed legislation that would affect the lives of handicapped children.

INSTITUTES ON COUNSELING PARENTS

As an outgrowth of discussions on the need for early counseling of parents which were held by the Commission's

Interdepartmental Committee on Mentally Handicapped Children, two institutes on the subject were conducted during this biennium.

These institutes, the first of their kind in the state, were promoted by the Commission through the cooperative effort of the Illinois Public Aid Commission, the Department of Public Welfare, the University of Illinois School of Social Work, and the Kappa Alpha Theta Illinois Project for Handicapped Children. Representatives from these agencies worked with the Commission as a planning committee. Expenses were defrayed by the Kappa Alpha Theta Project for whom the Commission has acted as consultant for a number of years.

Frequently, general welfare and health agencies see families of mentally retarded children who have no other counseling agency available to them. Often there is hesitancy in accepting these families for counseling because of lack of knowledge of the problems they present. The aim of the institutes was to help workers to a better understanding of the difficulties faced by parents of mentally retarded children and to a fuller knowledge of how counseling skills can be used to help these families.

Development of the institutes was in line with the Commission's efforts to interpret the needs of handicapped children to professional groups working in agencies that serve children generally.

STUDY OF PUBLIC CHILDREN SERVICES

During this biennium, the Commission's coordinating function was used to bring together representatives from the broad field of children's services administered by the State. The purpose was a joint study of the programs offered in health, welfare and education and the interrelationships involved.

OTHER AGENCY COMMITTEES

The Commission represents the interests of handicapped children on many committees in the general fields of health, welfare and education. During the period of this report, the Commission staff worked with 23 such groups on a continuing basis. Commission members also participate on many such inter-agency working groups. These committees are effective instruments for promoting improved conditions for handicapped children as well as for other children in the state.

COORDINATED EFFORT

The Commission is often the means through which the work of professional agencies and community groups are brought together in the interests of the handicapped child.

The Kappa Alpha Theta Illinois Project for Handicapped Children offers an example of the Commission's coordinating work between professional and citizen groups. Many agencies serving children are confronted with individual needs which cannot be met through regular channels. Through consultation with the Commission, the Kappa Alpha Theta Alumnae Association set up a project to help furnish equipment or services for children who, for one reason or another, cannot be served by any public or private agency. In offering, consultation to such an organization, the Commission helps make effective use of a community resource for these needy young people.

Some of the services and equipment furnished through this Project during the past two years included: transportation for a deaf-blind child so he could attend a special school; a wig for a five-year-old girl who is bald; orthodontia for an adolescent boy who is severely crippled; tutoring in speech for a youngster who lives in a district where speech correction is not available through the schools. Funds to set up two institutes on counseling parents of mentally defective children, which the Commission sponsored in cooperation with other agencies, were supplied through this Project.

During the period of this report close to $4,000 was spent by this Project and over 150 children were helped with equipment or services.

TRAINING CENTERS FOR MENTALLY RETARDED

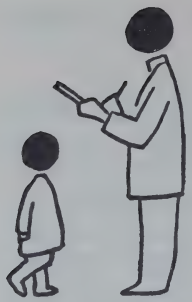
A major promotional effort during this biennium, and one which has involved much cooperative planning, is the work of the Commission in encouraging the establishment of training centers for mentally retarded children in their home communities.

For a number of years, the Commission has been concerned about the welfare of the mentally handicapped boys and girls whose abilities fall below those now accepted in special classes of the public schools. For these children, the state has made no provision except through institutional care at Lincoln State Training School and Colony and the

Dixon State School. Both of these institutions are overcrowded and have long waiting lists.

The Commission is now recommending to the 69th General Assembly the enactment of legislation to benefit this group of young people. The proposed legislation would provide State financial assistance to local school districts that furnish programs for their "trainable" mentally handicapped boys and girls. The Commission believes that the mentally handicapped child, no matter how limited his capacity, shares with other children the right to develop his full potentialities.

The Seguin School in Berwyn serves mentally retarded children.



THE ANSWERS

fact-finding a continuous activity

Sound planning calls for facts and many of them. What are some of the special problems faced by handicapped boys and girls and where are the solutions to be found? What are some of the successful programs for them in the states and abroad? What new facts are coming to light from medical and psychological laboratories and from experimental projects?

Answers to many questions are needed before full opportunities can be assured for all the handicapped young people in Illinois.

The Commission is constantly alert to information on how children with physical or mental handicaps are faring in their home communities: the preschool deaf child, for example - what are his opportunities for early development of speech; the boy whose handicap is a double one, crippled and mentally retarded - how about training for him in his home district; the child who must do his learning while he lies in a hospital bed - what is being done to protect him from loneliness and apathy.

The Commission asks many questions and searches for the answers.

SOURCES

Facts are gathered by the Commission from a variety of sources: some informally through interviews with families or with agency representatives who work directly with handicapped children; some through a systematic combing and review of literature in the field; some through interviews with experts; some through special study projects on a particular problem. Information from one source is integrated with information from another. Through various staff activities it is channeled to professional workers and community groups concerned with the welfare of these children. It is an important part of all Commission planning.

Closely interwoven are the Commission's activities in fact-finding, promotion of needed resources and public interpretation.

SPECIAL STUDIES

During the present biennium special studies were made on:

> Premature Births and Handicapping Conditions; a summary of current literature relating to the incidence of handicapping conditions among prematurely born children.
>
> Services for the Aphasic Child in Illinois; an exploratory survey of the need for additional facilities for diagnosis and training of aphasic children.
>
> Educational Services to the Hospitalized Child Through State Special Education Programs; current legislative and administrative provisions for schooling of hospitalized children throughout the states.
>
> Resources Available to Handicapped Children in Illinois; current review and listing of types of services offered through state-wide public and private agencies.

Fact-finding studies now in process include: a comparative study of special education legislation in the United States and its territories and a survey of available literature in the field of sheltered workshops for mentally retarded children.

PARTICIPATION IN OTHER AGENCY STUDIES

Members of the Commission staff often participate in studies conducted by other agencies or groups when the subject relates to the lives of handicapped children. During this biennium, the staff took part in the national study on qualifications of teachers in the field of special education, conducted by the United States Office of Education; the work-study group on children in need of long-term care, sponsored by the National Commission on Chronic Illness; and the study of the Hospitalized Child, made by the International Council for Exceptional Children.

REACHING THE PUBLIC

to create understanding and acceptance of handicapped children

When communities know and understand their handicapped children, they are more concerned about their welfare and interested in providing the services needed for them. For this reason a program of public education is an ongoing activity of the Commission and is woven through much of its work.

Both citizen and professional groups are reached by the Commission to keep them posted about the youngsters in their midst who are physically or mentally handicapped. Attention is called to the resources available as well as the services that are lacking. Through this program efforts are constantly made to dissipate the thoughtless, rejecting attitudes toward disabling conditions that so unnecessarily handicap many young people.

The Commission's interpretation program is carried out through publication of articles and booklets; exhibits; talks to groups; use of radio and television interviews; institutes and conferences.

EMPHASIS

Considerable emphasis of public interpretation activities during the period of this report was placed on ways to keep the handicapped child in the mainstream of childhood activities and on ways to increase opportunities for early discovery and treatment of handicapping conditions. These were priority objectives for the biennium.

CONFERENCE ON EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

A major effort of the public interpretation program is the statewide Governor's Conference on Exceptional Children which the Commission has sponsored annually for over 10 years. These conferences bring together people from many sections of the state who are interested in the welfare of handicapped children. They include parents, representatives of civic groups, doctors, nurses, social workers, teachers, recreation workers and other community and professional people. Experts from many fields participate in the planning and on the programs of these one-day conferences. The programs in recent years have evolved from general meetings of broad interest to a series of sectional meetings, some of which are designed to bring specialized material to professional workers.

In both conferences held during the biennium, sectional meetings were focused on:

helping professional staff increase their skills in working with handicapped children

and

stimulating community groups to develop more local programs for children with physical or mental disabilities.

MAINSTREAM

The 1953 conference held in Chicago had for its theme, The Handicapped Child In The Mainstream. A recurring thought in the sectional meetings was: if the handicapped are to achieve a satisfying and productive life in their communities they must start early sharing in the normal experiences of their contemporaries.

THE OUNCE OF PREVENTION

The 1954 conference held in Peoria was headed up under the theme of The Ounce of Prevention. Some of the sectional meetings were planned in close cooperation with the Illinois Department of Public Health. Consideration was given to prevention-planning in relation to the total program for handicapped children. Special emphasis was placed on community programs established by local citizens.

PUBLICATIONS

During the period covered by this report, the Commission prepared and published:

THE HANDICAPPED CHILD IN THE MAINSTREAM
Proceedings of the Tenth Governor's Conference on Exceptional Children

THE HANDICAPPED CHILD AND HIS FAMILY GROUP by Helen Ross
Reprinted and distributed cooperatively by Mental Health Education of the Illinois Department of Public Welfare and the Commission
(From the Ninth Governor's Conference on Exceptional Children)

ARCHITECTURAL BLOCKS IN SCHOOL BUILDINGS
The Problem and the Solution
Prepared and published in cooperation with the firm of Bryant and Walchli of Chicago, School Architects

RESOURCES FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN IN ILLINOIS
Revised

A PARTIAL LIST OF RESOURCES FOR MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN IN ILLINOIS

MEET THE HANDICAPPED CHILD, An INTRODUCTORY READING LIST
Revised

HEALTHY GROUP EXPERIENCE FOR THE HANDICAPPED CHILD by Paul Simon
Printed cooperatively by the Division of Exceptional Children, Superintendent of Public Instruction, State of Illinois and the Commission
(From the 11th Governor's Conference on Exceptional Children)

PUBLIC HEALTH IS PREVENTION
Printed cooperatively by the Illinois

Department of Public Health and the Commission
(From the 11th Governor's Conference on Exceptional Children)

Prepared for publication but not yet available for distribution are:

THE OUNCE OF PREVENTION
Proceedings of the 11th Governor's Conference on Exceptional Children

WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE HANDICAPPED CHILD -
The Social Worker on the Rehabilitation Team by Edward F. Lis, M.D.
Reprint from Public Aid in Illinois
(From the 11th Governor's Conference on Exceptional Children)

DISTRIBUTION

During this biennium approximately 15,000 copies of Commission publications were distributed. Most of these were sent upon request to citizens of Illinois, many of them living in small communities throughout the state. Increasingly, requests for Commission booklets come from universities and colleges in many sections of the country for use as course material or assigned reading. Through requests from international agencies and organizations in other countries, Commission publications reach a number of groups working with disabled young people throughout the world.

INTERPRETATION TO GROUPS

Public understanding of the handicapped child is increased each year by talks before community and professional groups. Both staff and Commission members address many meetings and lead or participate in many panel discussions. Talks made by staff members totaled thirty-one during the period of this report.

EXHIBITS

Each year some interpretation of the handicapped child is made through Commission exhibits. Three types of exhibits were prepared and shown during the period of this report:

one, for professional groups pointing out ways that service agencies could help promote an adequate program for handicapped children;

one, for community groups, aimed to stimulate them to undertake reading programs and club projects focused on handicapped children;

one, designed to introduce the public to books about handicapping conditions which are available through public libraries or the library of the Commission.

Exhibits were shown at the State Convention of the Illinois Federation of Women's Clubs; Parent-Teacher Association, District Conference; Health Fair of the Northwest Side Community Council; Centennial Building Springfield, in cooperation with the Illinois State Library; Conference of the National Association for Retarded Children; Annual Conference of Illinois Welfare Association; Illinois State Fair, Springfield; Governor's Conference on Exceptional Children; Conference of the National Catholic Education Association.

COMMISSION LIBRARY

The Commission's specialized library of books and periodicals relating to handicapping conditions in children is made available to the public as well as to the staff and the committees working with the Commission. Many parent groups, social agencies and civic organizations called upon the resources of the library during the present biennium. On the shelves are over five hundred books and a hundred periodicals.

The Governor of Illinois visits an exhibit.

SHARING EXPERIENCE

consultation services of the Commission

The Commission's broad experience with problems of handicapped children is shared with many through its consultation service. It may be a parent seeking a needed resource, or a recreation center asking help on how to revise its program to include crippled boys and girls, or a civic group asking consultation on a project for mentally retarded teen-agers. People representing a wide variety of problems come to the Commission each year for advice and counsel.

OPPORTUNITY FOR INTERPRETATION

Through consultation with civic leaders and agency representatives, the Commission had the opportunity during this biennium to: help plan for more ounces of prevention in services for handicapped young people and for more integration of programs for them with those of other children in the community.

CONSULTATION WITH COMMUNITY GROUPS

Many civic organizations, parent groups and service clubs came to the Commission for consultation during the period of this report. Some of the projects on which they sought consultation include:

setting up local training centers for mentally retarded children; sheltered work shops for handicapped teen-agers; education of the public on disabling conditions; provision of special equipment for handicapped young people; parent education programs; mobilization of community interest in establishing special classes in local school districts; provision of scholarships for professional training in the field of the handicapped.

CONSULTATION WITH AGENCIES

Evidence that Commission effort is bearing fruit was gathered through the increasing number of general child-serving agencies that consulted the Commission on how to adapt their programs more effectively to the needs of the handicapped child. Some of the projects on which consultation was given by the Commission to social agencies throughout the state during this biennium include:

plans to integrate blind children into a recreation program; provision of services for young people with more than one handicap; setting up social services for hospitalized children; development of day camps for blind youngsters; inservice training programs; development of preschool programs for hard of hearing boys and girls; setting up standards for residential care of the handicapped child; planning counseling service for parents; adapting a nursery program to include handicapped boys and girls.

INDIVIDUAL CASES

When solutions are hard to find, parents of handicapped children often bring their individual problems to the Commission for help. Since the Commission is not a direct-service agency, referrals are made to agencies that are prepared to help if one is available. If none can be found, consultation is offered by the Commission in working out an individual plan for the child. In instances where facilities are found lacking, the Commission gathers information on unmet needs for further study and planning. This is an important source for viewing at close range the gaps in needed services.

During this biennium there were approximately 500 individual children served through this consultation program. Here are a few examples of the problems that were brought to the Commission:

EXCLUDED

"My eight year old son is a brain-injured child. He is becoming more high strung and distractable. Recently he was excluded from the ungraded class in our public school. Staying home isn't helping him any. Where can I take him for the training he needs?"

A WELCOME

"Do you know a summer camp where my adolescent daughter who is deaf would be welcome? She lacks opportunities for companionship with young people her own age".

TEASED

"Where can I go for some advice on rearing my crippled grandson? The other day he threw rocks at some boys who teased him. He misses out on a lot of fun because he can't run and play like other children. Is there some place near my town where I can go to talk things over?"

FORWARD STEPS

Many forward steps have been taken during the past two years on the road toward insuring better opportunities for handicapped children in Illinois. They could not have been accomplished without the enthusiastic cooperation of numerous professional and community groups throughout the state. Just ahead and in clear view are important next steps to be taken in the coming biennium.

EARLY HELP

Much more remains to be done in the work of prevention. Through continued promotion of local resources in health, education and welfare, chances for early discovery and treatment could be opened up to many more handicapped young people. The home community of a child is in most instances the natural base for preventive programs for him.

TWO OR MORE

For most children with two or more handicaps there are still many obstacles on the road to their best development. These youngsters are the ones who are crippled and who are also hard of hearing, or visually handicapped or mentally retarded. Some of them are both deaf and blind. Many of them go without the full educational opportunity that is their birthright.

FOR FAMILIES

More counseling service for families of handicapped children is a vital need. The Commission will continue to encourage and help agencies that serve children generally to adjust their programs to include more services for the handicapped child and his parents.

CONCERTED EFFORT

Vocational counseling and training are areas that call for concerted effort by many interested groups if handicapped young people are to find a satisfying and useful place in their communities when they grow up. So are the areas of recreation and camping. It is a serious problem that many handicapped children still cannot receive the educational and social services they need in their home communities.

More integration of services for these children, more coordination and planning for them - many steps are ahead to take toward these objectives.

THE ONE GOAL

No easy answers are at hand for the problems that block the road to needed opportunities for handicapped children. Through increased public awareness of the problems and long-term cooperative planning and effort, the Commission believes that the One Goal for every child - fulfillment of his best potentialities - can be brought within reach of every child in Illinois.

There is no place for a double standard in opportunities offered to children.

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State of Illinois

William G. Stratton, Governor

COMMISSION FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

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1957-1959

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William G. Stratton, Governor

COMMISSION FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

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STATE OF ILLINOIS
WILLIAM G. STRATTON, *Governor*

COMMISSION FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

160 NORTH LA SALLE STREET
CHICAGO 1
FINANCIAL 6-2000

April 1, 1959

JANE BULL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

To the Honorable William G. Stratton, Governor
and
To the Honorable Members of the 71st General Assembly
State of Illinois
Springfield

Gentlemen:

It is my privilege to submit herewith the report of the Commission for Handicapped Children for the 70th Biennium.

In the report we have summarized the statutory responsibilities of this Commission, indicated what has been done to discharge those responsibilities during the current biennium, enumerated continuing unmet needs, and made recommendations for specific legislative action.

The Commission for Handicapped Children wishes also to express their appreciation for the thoughtful consideration and unfailing support which the General Assembly has given over the years, and continues to give, to the program for physically handicapped children and mentally handicapped children in Illinois.

Respectfully submitted,

/Helen W. Dormitzer

Mrs. Henry C. Dormitzer
Chairman

RECOMMENDATIONS TO MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ENABLING LEGISLATION

1. To authorize the Division of Child Welfare to provide continuing counseling services of a high quality for the families of handicapped children throughout the state, beginning at the time the diagnosis is made and continuing over as long a period of time as is necessary. Additional appropriations should be provided the Division of Child Welfare to make it possible to carry out this authorization.

2. To provide for a statewide and continuous child accounting system, including all children from birth to twenty-one years of age and including data on handicapping conditions.

3. To provide immediate care for those mentally handicapped children committed but not yet admitted to a state institution, through the purchase of care by the state from private nursing homes or schools, if necessary.

4. To establish a residential training school for educable mentally handicapped adolescents who require such a setting for a limited period of time, either because of lack of prevocational services in their home communities, or because of social problems which might be solved by placement outside the home for a temporary period.

APPROPRIATIONS

5. To finance adequately the Institute for Research on Exceptional Children of the University of Illinois to enable it to retain permanent, qualified staff on a continuing basis.

6. To make possible the establishment of local diagnostic facilities for mentally handicapped children, with emphasis upon the expansion of existing diagnostic facilities whenever possible, rather than the development of new facilities.

7. To refine and strengthen the training programs at Lincoln State School and Dixon State School, with emphasis upon returning to the community all young people with a potential.

8. Of the feasibility of placing the training programs of the state residential schools for handicapped children under the administration of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

9. Of a possible state guardianship plan which would insure protection and care of mentally handicapped persons, in whatever situation best meets their needs, when their families are no longer able to provide for them.

INTRODUCTION

WHAT

The Commission for Handicapped Children was created by the General Assembly in 1941 for the purpose of the continuous development, coordination, and appropriate use of medical, educational, welfare, and vocational services for physically handicapped children and mentally handicapped children throughout Illinois. The goal of these services is to remove or alleviate handicaps whenever possible and to prepare handicapped children--educationally, psychologically, and vocationally--to lead as normal and productive lives as possible.

WHO

The Commission is composed of thirteen members, nine who are appointed by the Governor and who serve without pay for staggered terms of three years each, and four who serve ex-officio--the Directors of Public Health, Public Welfare, and Labor and the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

HOW

The Commission serves in a liaison capacity among existing tax-supported and voluntary services, to insure their most effective use and to prevent duplication of effort.

Learning how to improve local facilities for handicapped children.

It serves as a clearinghouse of information for individuals and direct-service agencies about existing programs and their proper use for the care of individual handicapped children.

It carries on a continuous program of information designed to acquaint the general public with the needs of handicapped children and to assist local groups and communities in developing plans to meet those needs.

It carries on a program of fact-finding in order to determine existing needs of handicapped children and the best ways of meeting those needs--either through expansion of present services or development of new services. It prepares evidence for administrators and the General Assembly regarding proposed administrative and legislative changes in the programs for handicapped children.

At quarterly meetings the Commission determines over-all policy and priorities for action; passes upon budget and major projects to be undertaken; and receives reports on staff activities, budget, and progress on projects. Its decisions are implemented by a full-time staff of eight persons and by the services of persons from a number of professions and agencies who contribute their time and skills to committee work.

IN THE ACT CREATING THE COMMISSION FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY INSTRUCTED IT:

"*To coordinate* the administrative responsibility and the services of the four State departments and officers represented in its membership insofar as they relate to the well-being of handicapped children. . . .and to compose any differences that may arise. . . .", and ". . . .to coordinate [public and private] efforts with those of the state departments and offices into a unified and comprehensive program.";

"*to stimulate* all public and private efforts throughout the State in the care, treatment, education, and social service of handicapped children. . .";

"*to promote* special classes and competent individual instruction. . .; to promote adequate provisions for medical diagnosis and treatment. . . .; to promote vocational guidance, training, placement, and social adjustment on an individual case work basis. . . .."; and

"to study conditions relating to. . . .physically or mentally handicapped children. . . .with a view toward improving the facilities and services. . . . in Illinois through recommended administrative and legislative action."

IN CARRYING OUT THESE INSTRUCTIONS

TO COORDINATE

The Commission has held regular quarterly meetings in September 1957, December 1957, March 1958, June 1958, September 1958, December 1958, and February 1959. A final meeting for this biennium is scheduled for June 1959. These meetings give an opportunity for the department heads, or their delegates, to discuss together the progress in their respective services for handicapped children; to plan for appropriate action on cooperative undertakings; and to consider jointly with the appointive members how best to utilize or assist the voluntary programs for handicapped children.

Parents learn how a young deaf child learns to speak.

During the first few months of this biennium, the Commission's Interdepartmental Committee on the Mentally Handicapped (established in 1953) continued to carry further the coordination of state services for retarded children and young adults. With the appointment by the Governor of the temporary Commission on Mental Retardation (with representation from the Commission for Handicapped Children), further functioning of the Interdepartmental Committee was postponed to prevent duplication and to insure that all efforts would be channeled through one official group.

Three series of informational meetings for parents of deaf preschool children have been conducted since the beginning of this biennium, attended by a total of 108 parents or close relatives of sixty-four deaf children under six years of age. Another series of six sessions is planned for April and May of this year, to give assistance to the families of approximately twenty additional children. This service, sponsored by the Commission's Advisory Committee on Hearing Conservation and Rehabilitation, is designed to help parents in the understanding and early home training of their deaf children and preparing them for school readiness. It is financed partially by voluntary agencies and service clubs and partially by public agencies, with the professional speakers contributing their time. The Advisory Committee on Hearing Conservation and Rehabilitation serves, as well, to coordinate a variety of interests and professional skills to attain a common goal.

The Kappa Alpha Theta Illinois Project for Handicapped Children continues to supplement the work of established agencies, using the Commission for Handicapped Children as its channel for professional and agency contacts and clearance. During this biennium the Theta Project provided a variety of services to meet the specific needs of eighty handicapped children, such as a walker for a blind baby, a wheelchair for a little girl with hydrocephalus, payments for orthodontia for a number of children. Approximately 225 additional handicapped children were represented in projects aided by the group, such as summer camping for blind children, speech centers for crippled or deaf children, and a scholarship fund for a school for mentally retarded children. Stated in monetary terms, these services represent approximately $4,500.00 in voluntary funds which have supplemented the program for handicapped children through this one channel.

As services from different sources increase, so does the need for coordination also increase, to insure that skills, money, and interest work together to serve more children better, instead of duplicating each other. Liaison between children with special needs and groups who are eager to help them is an important part of this Commission's work and leads in the direction of "a unified and comprehensive program".

TO STIMULATE

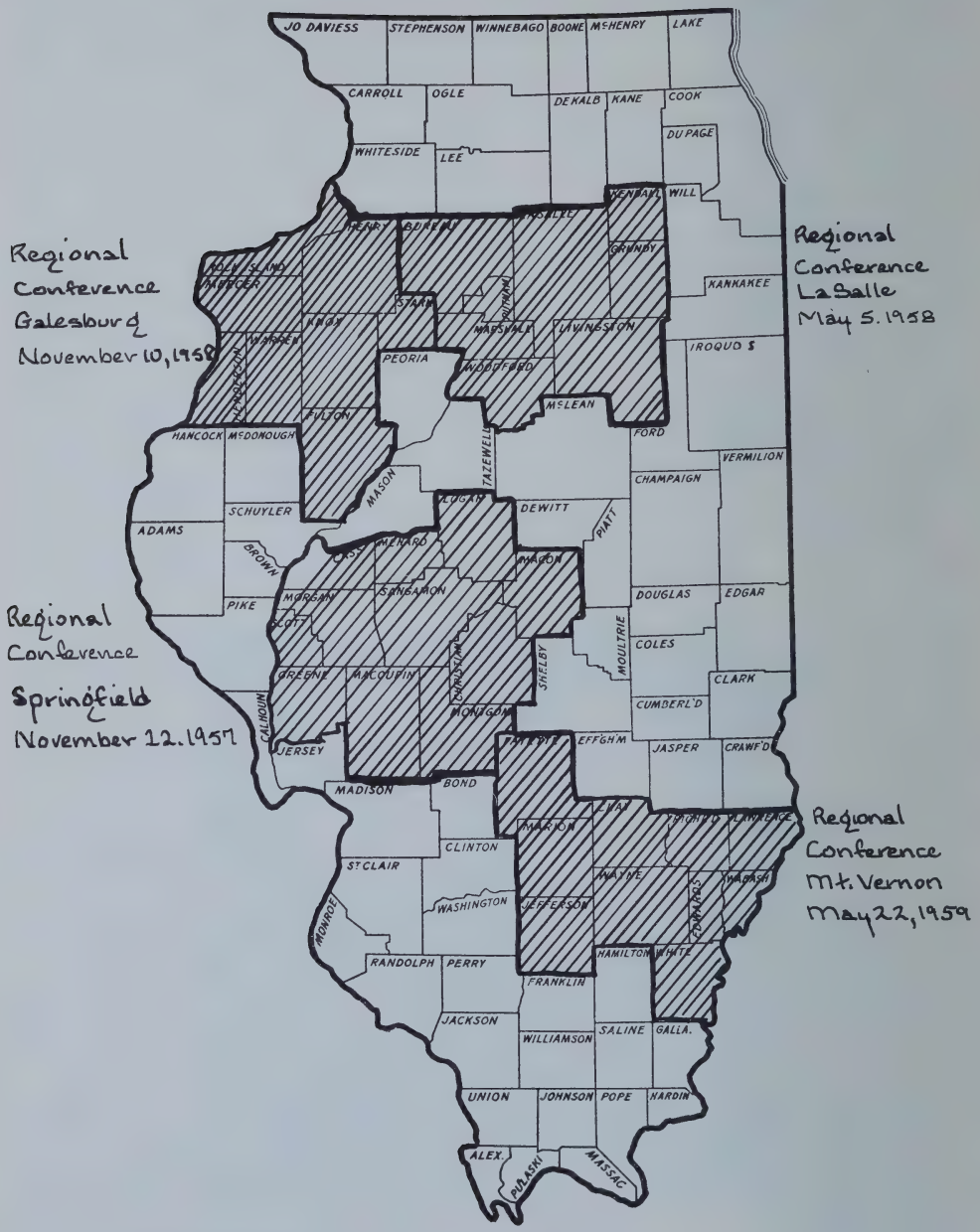
Exhibits have been prepared and displayed at two State Fairs, four regional conferences, and annual conferences of the Illinois Welfare Association, the Illinois Congress of Parents and Teachers, and the Youth Commission, to further interest in and understanding of the needs of handicapped children.

Members of the staff have given thirty-one talks to a variety of service clubs, professional associations, career conferences, university classes, and parent groups.

A directory, *Resources for Handicapped Children in Illinois*, has been revised and reissued, and distributed widely throughout the state so that public and private efforts to serve handicapped children may be properly directed and valuable time not lost because someone, somewhere, does not know which way to turn.

Living With an Apparent Handicap, an address designed to further public understanding of the handicapped person as, first of all, a person, which was given at one of the regional conferences, has been printed and is available upon request.

Living With An Apparent Handicap is the title of an address given at a regional conference.


Regional Conference Galesburg November 10, 1958
Regional Conference LaSalle May 5. 1958
Regional Conference Springfield November 12. 1957
Regional Conference Mt. Vernon May 22, 1959
JO DAVIESS
STEPHENSON
WINNEBAGO
BOONE
McHENRY
LAKE
CARROLL
OGLE
DEKALB
KANE
COOK
DU PAGE
WHITESIDE
LEE
WILL
HENRY
BUREAU
GRUNDY
KANKAKEE
ROCK ISLAND
MERCER
STARK
PUTNAM
KNOX
WARREN
HENDERSON
PEORIA
WOODFORD
LIVINGSTON
IROQUOIS
McLEAN
FULTON
HANCOCK
McDONOUGH
TAZEWELL
MASON
FORD
VERMILION
CHAMPAIGN
SCHUYLER
LOGAN
DEWITT
PIATT
ADAMS
BROWN
CASS
MENARD
MACON
PIKE
MORGAN
SANGAMON
DOUGLAS
EDGAR
SCOTT
COLES
MOULTRIE
SHELBY
CHRISTIAN
GREENE
MACOUPIN
CLARK
CUMBERL'D
MONTGOM
CALHOUN
JERSEY
FAYETTE
EFF'GH'M
JASPER
CRAWF'D
MADISON
BOND
MARION
CLAY
RICHLAND
LAWRENCE
CLINTON
ST CLAIR
WAYNE
EDWARDS
WABASH
WASHINGTON
JEFFERSON
MONROE
RANDOLPH
PERRY
HAMILTON
WHITE
FRANKLIN
JACKSON
WILLIAMSON
SALINE
GALLA.
UNION
JOHNSON
POPE
HARDIN
ALEX.
PULASKI
MASSAC

During the past twenty-four months, a total of 14,468 copies of Commission publications was distributed to persons interested in some phase of work with, or for, handicapped children.

While the time of public apathy about the handicapped child is long past, there is continuing need for interpretation of what it is that he needs and how his family, the community, and the State of Illinois may best meet those needs.

TO PROMOTE

Three regional conferences on exceptional children, comprising twenty-seven counties, have been sponsored by the Commission with the cooperation of seventy-nine other state and local, public and private agencies and organizations. Each of these conferences has been planned with the help of local representatives from the counties included in the conference. Each conference has centered its program around local problems and needs which might, at least in part, be locally solved. Each has been attended by approximately two hundred persons - parents, doctors, teachers, social workers, nurses, and interested citizens, presenting a good cross-section of the region. A fourth regional conference is planned for the spring of 1959 to serve approximately ten counties in southeastern Illinois.

The conferences, we believe, serve as one means of stimulating public and private efforts for handicapped children in, or near, their home communities.

Community Programs for Mentally Handicapped Young Adults was prepared by the Interdepartmental Committee on Mentally Handicapped Children, published by this Commission, and widely distributed. It is a guide to local community groups eager to provide group experiences for the mentally handicapped teen-ager and young adult in his home community.

For further assistance to local communities on this same kind of project, three supplements were later prepared: *Suggestions for the Organization of a Sheltered Workshop Program, Suggestions for the Organization of a Training Program for Everyday Living, and Suggestions for the Organization of a Recreation Program.*

These guides were designed to promote the vocational training and social adjustment of handicapped young people for whom the school can make no further provision and who, because of limited ability and social immaturity, cannot yet take advantage of a more formal program of vocational preparation.

The Commission has been represented by members of its staff on twenty-four continuing, working committees during this biennium. These committees (some established by this Commission, some by other groups) serve as an effective device for drawing together a combination of skills, interest, and knowledge from a variety of sources to focus on one problem. Some of them have met monthly, some less frequently. In each case, our participation has been directed toward the goal of promoting the development or the improved use of educational, social, medical, or vocational services for handicapped children.

A major project, only recently decided upon and still in its initial stage, is directed toward developing more effective programs for severely handicapped young people, so that they may be productively employed in a sheltered environment or eventually be prepared for competitive wage-earning.

Two major needs have been explored: (1) the need for more intensive, planned action in this direction during the school years, and (2) the need for additional, improved training and employment services for young people during their immediate post-school years. During the coming biennium, promotion of activities to help meet these two needs will have a high priority in the Commission's work.

TO STUDY

During the past eight months, the Commission has been carrying on an intensive study throughout the state of severely physically handicapped children whose needs for physical care are not being met or are being met in an inappropriate place. The study is being carried on under the direction of a steering committee of experts in medical care, child welfare, and research, and with the cooperation of a number of state, local, and voluntary agencies, who have made their records available for the study.

Some of the young people being found in the study have progressive, deteriorating conditions for which no remedial measures are now known and which will probably terminate fatally within a few years. Others have chronic, long-term disabilities which prevent them from utilizing educational or vocational programs. Many of them are also mentally defective and await admission to Lincoln or Dixon State School. All of them require nursing or attendant care which families find it difficult or impossible to provide. None of them should be in a hospital for the acutely ill.

Approximately how many such children are there in Illinois? What sort of care do they require? In what sort of setting, or settings? Might some of them be

cared for in existing programs? Might some of them remain at home, if homemaker or attendant services were available? Do they represent a gap in the state's program, resulting either in a too-heavy strain on their families or in their occupying hospital beds needed for the acutely ill?

The study is directed toward finding the answers to some of these questions. When we have the answers, the next step will be to work out the appropriate administrative and legislative action to improve conditions for these children.

Consultation or referral service has been given on the cases of 658 individual children in response to requests from schools, families, agencies, private physicians, and the press. The needed assistance has been varied. It included financial aid, continuing casework service, school placement, medical and dental care, training, and employment, in that order.

In some cases, the requests can easily be referred to the proper resource for assistance. In some situations, much exploration and ingenuity must be exercised before the needed assistance can be provided. Sometimes there is no answer possible at present, and it is necessary to interpret to the individual why this is true and to try to help work out an alternative plan, while the case is recorded as one of the unmet needs in the state. In all instances, the requests add to our knowledge of what is needed to improve services available to handicapped children in Illinois.

A Commission exhibit at the 1957 State Fair points up agency functions.

CONTINUING UNMET NEEDS

All children in all parts of the state have the right: to adequate medical care, close at hand; to education and training of the kind and to the extent commensurate with their capabilities; to counseling and rehabilitation to prepare them for their place in the society of today; to care when their families cannot provide it.

There are continuing unmet needs in Illinois that prevent the realization of these rights of childhood:

The need to find and identify handicapped children early so that remedial measures do not wait until the child has reached school age.

We offer two recommendations which, if adopted by the General Assembly, would remedy this need. They are *No. 2* and *No. 6* in the listed "Recommendations" and are as follows:

> *"2. To provide for a statewide and continuous child accounting system, including all children from birth to twenty-one years of age and including data on handicapping conditions."*
>
> *"6. To make possible the establishment of local diagnostic facilities for mentally handicapped children, with emphasis upon the expansion of existing diagnostic facilities whenever possible, rather than development of new facilities."*
>
> We also support the establishment of local health departments to this end.

The need for families to have assistance in understanding and coping with the personal and social problems of rearing and training their handicapped children, as well as assistance in long range planning.

Recommendation No. 1 is directed to this end. It is:

> *"1. To authorize the Division of Child Welfare to provide continuing counseling services of a high quality for the families of handicapped children throughout the state, beginning at the time diagnosis is made and continuing over as long a period of time as is necessary. Additional appropriations should be provided the Division of Child Welfare to make it possible to carry out this authorization."*

The need to extend and improve local school programs for handicapped children so that more children are served better in their home communities during their school-age years.

In support of this need we ask passage of HB 57 and adequate appropriations to assist local special education programs. Also during the coming biennium this Commission proposes to promote and direct an evaluation of the educational program for deaf and hard-of-hearing children in Illinois.

The need to alleviate the burden on families whose children are committed but not admitted to a state institution.

Since the provision of additional state institutional facilities will take a number of years, the Commission proposes *Recommendation No. 3* as an interim solution.

> *"3. To provide immediate care for those mentally handicapped children committed but not admitted to a state institution, through the purchase of care by the state from private nursing homes or schools, if necessary."*

The need for realistic prevocational programs for handicapped young people both in institutional and in community settings so that these young people can make the most of their capabilities.

The Commission's proposed emphasis on prevocational services during the next biennium and the following recommendations, *No. 4* and *No. 7* are directed to the end:

> *"4. To establish a residential training school for educable mentally handicapped adolescents who require such a setting for a limited period of time, either because of lack of prevocational services in their home communities, or because of social problems which might be solved by placement outside the home for a temporary period."*

> *"7. To refine and strengthen the training programs at Lincoln State School and Dixon State School, with emphasis upon returning to the community all young people with a potential."*

The need for more knowledge and better utilization of the services now existing, so that children who might now be cared for do not "fall between the gaps".

Regional conferences on exceptional children are designed to help meet this need, as is the study of severely physically handicapped children carried on during this biennium.

The need for carrying on continuous research into the education, training, and management of handicapped children, and for applying this knowledge in direct service programs.

The Commission's study of severely physically handicapped children and the proposed evaluation of educational programs for deaf and hard-of-hearing children are directed to this end, as is the following recommendation that there be an appropriation:

"5. *To finance adequately the Institute for Research on Exceptional Children of the University of Illinois to enable it to retain permanent, qualified staff on a continuing basis.*"

The need to give intensive and thorough study of the legislative and administrative aspects of certain proposals that have been made for the education or protection of handicapped children in Illinois.

To enable this to be done, we make the recommendation that there be legislative study:

"8. *Of the feasibility of placing the training programs of the state residential school for handicapped children under the administration of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.*"

"9. *Of a possible state guardianship plan which would insure protection and care of mentally handicapped persons, in whatever situation best meets their needs, when their families are no longer able to provide for them.*"